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Olena Rypich  
*Western Washington University*

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# KLIPSUN



WINTER 2011 | LAYERS

BEYOND THE HIGH

THE BIG COVER-UP

FORGOTTEN FOUNDATION





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# KLIPSUN

AN INDEPENDENT STUDENT PUBLICATION  
OF WESTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

**EDITOR IN CHIEF** Olena Rypich

**MANAGING EDITOR** Keegan Prosser

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Kayley Richards

Carey Rose

**DESIGNERS** Chelsea Kennedy

Shea Taisey

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**MULTIMEDIA EDITOR** Carina Bissett

**ONLINE EDITOR** Elin Jike

**PHOTOGRAPHERS** Kaylin Bettinger

Jaynie Hancock

Jeremy Smith

Michelle Naranjo

Jordan Stead

**WRITERS** Sakeus Bankson

Kaylin Bettinger

Gina Cole

Abby Espiritu

Marianne Graff

Shawna Leader

Evan Marczyński

Michelle Naranjo

Nicole Strep

Becky Tachihara

Alissa Wolken

Benjamin Woodard

**ADVISER** Peggy Watt

**CONTACT** 360.650.3737

klipsunmag@gmail.com

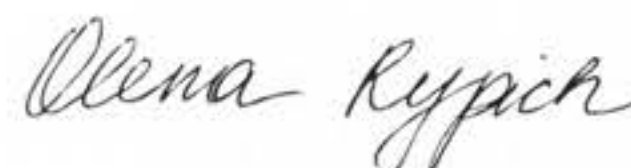
Dear Reader,

The picture to the right cannot say much about me. Beyond what is visible at first glance are the many layers of my identity: Ukrainian, aspiring public relations professional and journalist, pianist, student and daughter, among many more. I've taken to embracing them all. Without any one of these layers, I wouldn't be the person I am today, and someone else may have been writing this letter.

The stories in this issue peel back many layers and expose what often goes unnoticed beneath the surface. One writer takes us on a journey back to the days when Bellingham was a booming center for coal. One story may leave you questioning your own safety; another, reconsidering how much you're willing to pay for beauty. A story of one student's radical transformation after weight loss may leave you wondering about the layers that make you, well, you. Try to see the complexity in even the most ordinary things, because nothing in life is too simple.

With this issue, we are also celebrating the life of Shearlean Duke, who lost her battle against a brain tumor in February. On one layer, she was an incredible woman; on another, a beloved professor, editor, public relations professional and mentor for many; and yet on another, a world traveler and loving wife. Her work and contributions to the Department of Journalism and Western are invaluable. She will always remain in our hearts.

Thanks for reading,



**OLENA RYPICH**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF



In memoriam:  
Shearlean  
Duke,  
1946-2011

**ON THE COVER:** Painted rock on I-5  
Photo by Jaynie Hancock | KLIPSUN





# The cost of color

TANNING AFFECTS MORE THAN SKIN'S SURFACE

Story by Marianne Graff  
Photo illustration by Jaynie Hancock

**T**he expression “beauty is only skin-deep” is tossed around often, but the word “only” can be misleading. A sun-kissed glow may look healthy, but tanning can affect layers of the skin beneath an individual’s bronze exterior, and although the tan may fade, damage never will.

Seated in a tiny office amid overflowing binders and stacks of medical texts, Dr. Mark Doherty, a Bellingham dermatologist at Dermatology and Laser Center Northwest, squints into a large microscope, examining slides of thinly sliced skin taken from a skin cancer patient. Each slide shows multiple layers of skin, and Doherty searches each for signs of cancer.

“There are three main layers of skin,” he says from behind his microscope. “Skin cancer can spread from the outermost layer all the way to the bone.”

Beneath the epidermis, or top layer, lies the dermis, or middle layer of the skin, which can vary in thickness. The hypodermis, or subcutis, is the lowest layer and is made up of mainly fatty tissue.

Jessica Steinberg, a 23-year-old Western alumna,

was not thinking about the dangers of tanning or how deep the tan went when she started tanning almost daily at the age of 15 during her freshman year at Everett High School in 2000.

When her friend’s mother started working at a tanning salon a block away from school, the girls tanned before class, during breaks or after school. During the sunless winter months, Steinberg sometimes increased her sessions to twice a day.

“I was totally in the dark about what tanning could do,” she says. “I was so into it. I bought all the tanning packages and stinky lotions.”

Using indoor tanning has become common for many Americans who wish to control their sun exposure but still get a tan. According to The Skin Cancer Foundation, almost 30 million Americans use indoor tanning each year, with about 70 percent of these being women between the ages of 16 and 29. Approximately 3.5 million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed each year in the United States.

When Steinberg started to develop autoimmune



diseases unrelated to tanning, her dermatologist told her tanning could aggravate her condition. Steinberg took the advice to heart and has not used tanning beds since her senior year of high school. She now also slathers on sunscreen whenever she plans to spend any time outdoors.

Four months ago, Steinberg noticed an irregular mole on her upper right forearm. What started as a round mole was beginning to expand and develop ragged, uneven edges.

Concerned, she looked up irregular moles and discovered hers looked similar to ones diagnosed as skin cancer. Her dermatologist agreed, so she opted to have it removed two months ago.

“My dermatologist believes the cell mutation of my mole was definitely encouraged by my tanning in high school,” Steinberg says.

Although a test later determined the mole was benign, Steinberg believes she made the right decision by having it removed.

“I am currently a very pale person and I love it,” Steinberg says, laughing. “I’m totally fine with it.”

An individual’s natural skin color plays a role in how quickly ultraviolet rays can damage skin, Doherty says. Those with naturally light-colored skin, such as Steinberg, tend to get sunburned easily, so damage can add up quickly.

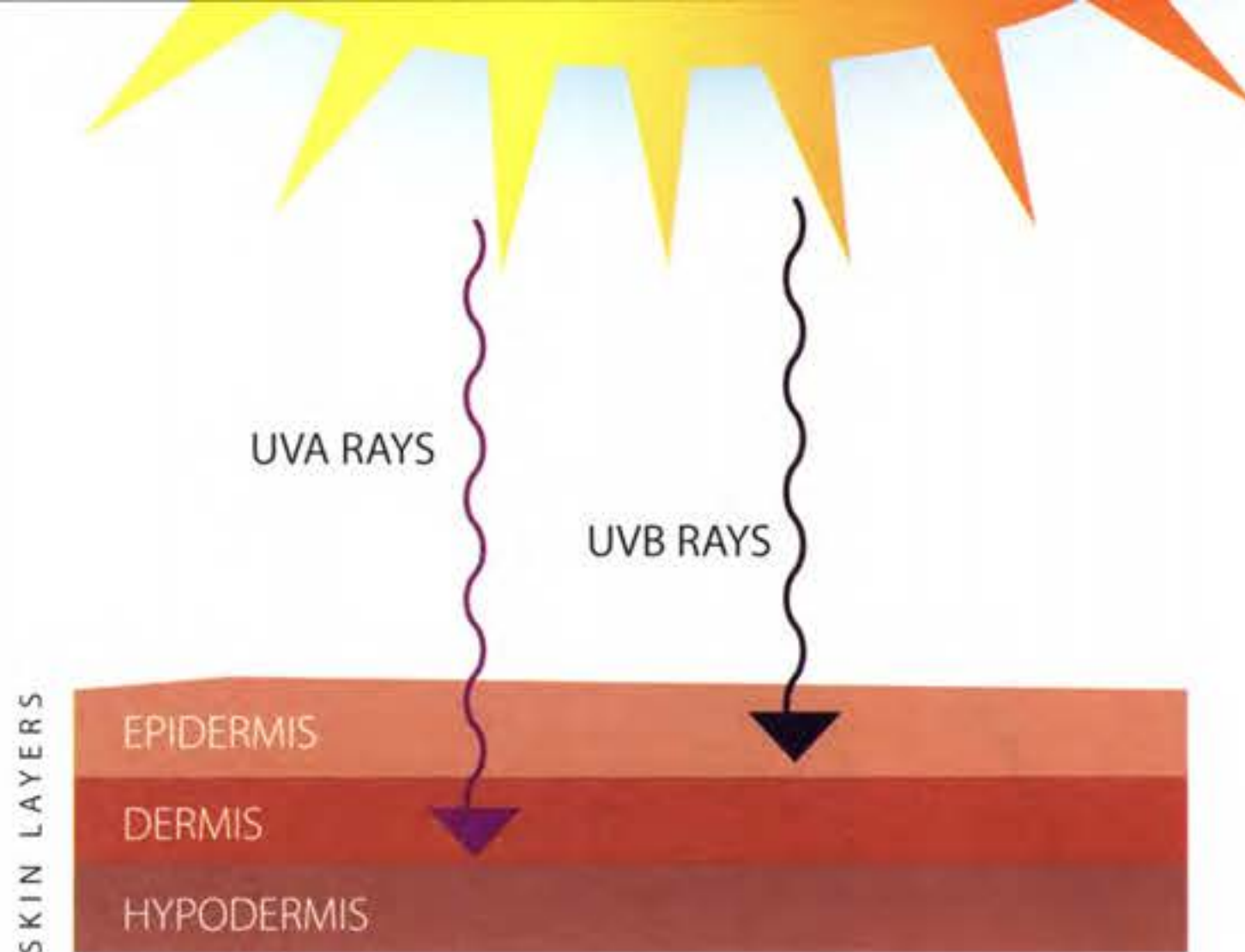
Doherty says ultraviolet radiation, which comes naturally from the sun, is categorized primarily as UVA and UVB rays, which penetrate the layers of the skin at different depths.

About 98 percent of the sunlight that reaches people is UVA, Doherty says. Although UVA rays penetrate deeper, he says UVB rays are considered to be more dangerous. UVB rays delay tanning and can lead to sunburns.

Although Steinberg has stopped using tanning beds, many continue to head to the salon to develop a base tan — a system hailed by employees of Desert Sun Tanning Salon as a way to prevent future sunburns.

Critics of the base tan include the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which argues a tan provides a sun protection factor of between two and four — nowhere near the recommended 15.

Malia Grajeda, 20, worked at Desert Sun Tanning Salon on Lakeway Drive for almost two years. She says the salon offers a variety of bed styles that emit both UVA and UVB rays.



Salon employees enforce time limits for tanning and ask customers about their skin sensitivity before suggesting a bed and length of time.

Conventional beds are more likely to cause minor sunburns because they emit more UVB rays, while high-pressure beds tan deeper layers of the skin and have a lower chance of causing sunburns, says Lizzy Orgill, an employee at Desert Sun.

“You can never erase your tanning history. All tanning is bad tanning because the effects never go away.”

DR. MARK DOHERTY

When asked about outdoor tanning, Orgill replies sarcastically, “How do you tan outdoors in Bellingham?”

Although Washington is known for overcast skies, each month Doherty sees about four cases of melanoma — the deadliest form of skin cancer.

“You can never erase your tanning history,” he says. “All tanning is bad tanning because the effects never go away.”

Steinberg knows firsthand tanning should not be taken lightly. She recently noticed her mole had started to grow back and went to have it re-examined for any signs of cancer that were missed during the first examination. Much to her relief, the test again revealed the mole as benign.

Her tanning history is the reason she must have every mole on her body mapped and monitored annually for signs of change — a reminder of the damage that lies beneath the skin’s thin surface layer. **K**



# Journey to the center

A KLIPSUN REPORTER TAKES ON  
THE FAMOUS LOLLIPOP-LICKING CHALLENGE



**ONLINE  
EXCLUSIVE**  
Check out the  
multimedia for this story  
at [klipsunmagazine.com](http://klipsunmagazine.com)

Story by Becky Tachihara  
Photo illustration by Jordan Stead

A lollipop rests on my living room table, its bold red wrapper indicating its raspberry flavor. I pick it up and peel off the crinkly paper wrapping.

However, this is not just any lollipop. It is a Tootsie Pop, and my mission is to unravel the mystery: How many licks does it take to get to the chewy, chocolatey Tootsie Roll center?

With a pencil in one hand and the lollipop in the other, I begin to lick.

Ellen Gordon, president of Tootsie Roll Industries, says the Tootsie Pop was invented in 1931 — 35 years after the creation of the original Tootsie Roll — when someone found a way to layer hard candy around a Tootsie Roll center.

“When it came out, there was really a lot of excitement in licking and licking and getting to the center,” Gordon says.

But the phenomenon of counting licks didn’t really begin until 1970, when Tootsie Roll Industries raised the question in a commercial for Tootsie Pops.

The commercials featured a little boy going around asking all the wise animals how many licks it takes to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop. The most famous animal, of course, was Mr. Owl, who never

passed three licks before crunching through the candy.

“We get thousands of inquiries. People write to us, people e-mail us, people send us pictures of how many licks it takes,” Gordon says. “It has become an age-old question.”

The intrepid lickers range from elementary school children to graduate students at Purdue University and the University of Michigan who built specialized licking machines to find the answer, she says.

I sat on my stairs and licked and tallied, and licked and tallied, and licked and tallied, all the way to 277 licks, where the center was finally exposed. As it turns out, my lick count was among the lowest of the 14 people who participated in Klipsun’s “How Many Licks?” experiment.

Our Bellingham lickers took between 164 and 1,020 licks to reach the Tootsie Roll center. Only two people, Western junior Sara Bates and Western graduate student Stead Halstead, took the same number of licks: 650 each.

So the world may never know how many licks it really takes to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop. But I do know one thing: the next time I eat a Tootsie Pop, I’m going to take a page out of Mr. Owl’s book:

One...two...three...CRUNCH! **K**





# Leaving the weight behind

A WESTERN STUDENT SHARES HIS STORY OF WEIGHT TRANSFORMATION

Story by Abby Espiritu  
Photos by Jordan Stead

**D**uane Stewart did not want to be big anymore. Over the past five years, the 23-year-old Western student has slowly stripped layers of fat off his body, unhealthy food out of his diet and low self-esteem out of his system. The sleeves of his oversized blue-and-green Seahawks jersey fall loosely to his elbows, barely hugging his arms. The jersey would have fit more tightly when Stewart was in high school and 70 pounds heavier.

Stewart graduated from high school in 2005, weighing 230 pounds. Throughout high school and the first two years of college, he played as an offensive lineman on his school's football team. He was considered "light" compared to the typical offensive lineman who weighs between 270 and 320 pounds. Despite Stewart being one of the "smaller" players, his body mass index of 32.1 still defined him as obese.

A body mass index, or a BMI, is a measure of body fat based on height and weight. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention states that having a BMI of 30 or greater indicates obesity.

The Washington State Department of Health found that obesity is an epidemic in both Washington state and the nation. It contributes to a multitude of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke and

diabetes, and increases the chance of premature death. According to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey, 3 percent of adults suffered a heart attack in Whatcom County in 2007. Adult diabetes has also doubled from 3 percent to 6 percent since 1996.

Stewart found out he was obese after visiting his doctor. "I thought to myself, 'What else is this going to lead to?'" Stewart says. "This isn't where I want to be."

Jill Kelly, Western's registered dietician, says a quarter of the population visiting Western's Student Health Center is overweight. Kelly says this is consistent with the nationwide average, in which at least 25 percent of people in most states are obese.

In Washington, more than 26 percent of adults were obese in 2009, according to the Washington Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System survey. In Whatcom County, 26 percent of county residents were obese in 2007, according to the Whatcom survey.

Stewart was raised in Abbotsford, British Columbia. He had big dreams of playing for the Canadian Football League, but decided to quit football after his sophomore year of college.

"It was a nice dream," Stewart says with a smile. "But it was time to move on." →



He recalls a time when he sat down at a restaurant and a waitress commented on how big he was. After that experience, Stewart knew he wanted to lose weight. "Nobody wants to hear that they're fat," he says.

Bellingham Athletic Club personal trainer Jimmy McCurry says he has trained obese people more frequently than people in shape. He says these people want to change their lifestyles. Whether they have goals of being able to run on a treadmill again or being able to go up the stairs without breathing heavily, they want to become active.

McCurry suggests people get two to three days of weight training and three to four days of cardiovascular training a week. He says exercise and dietary restrictions can lead to weight loss and to a healthy and active lifestyle.

"Not enough obese people get the help that they need," McCurry says. Sometimes, he says, people are afraid to take that first step.

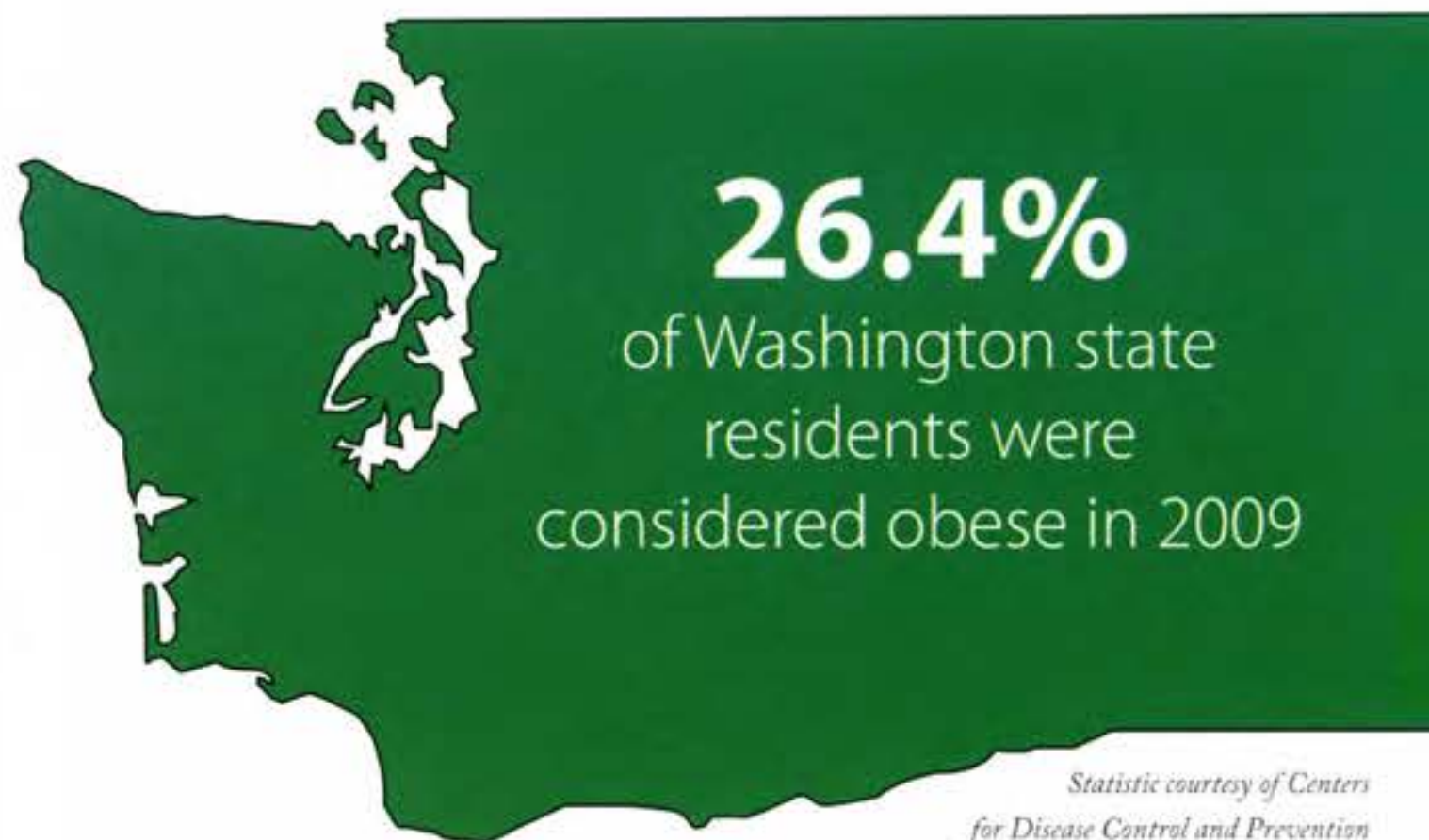
When a person takes in too many calories and doesn't exercise, the calories get converted from energy to fat, says Amy Ellings, a nutrition consultant at the Washington State Department of Health.



**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Duane Stewart got this tattoo after he ran the Bellingham Bay Marathon. The number 26.2 represents the distance of a marathon in miles. The two vertical lines represent the number of marathons Stewart has run. He plans on adding three more lines to his tattoo soon.

**ABOVE:** Duane Stewart gets in starting position, focusing on the track ahead of him.

Although Stewart was an athlete, he was still unhealthy. "I wanted to find the athlete I was supposed to be," he says. He decided to start running to shed weight. "It was a slow process," Stewart sighs. "I hated running, but if this is what it takes to get what I



want, I have to do it. I can't wake up and be 70 pounds lighter."

Stewart ran his first marathon in Seattle in 2009, which he almost didn't finish when his whole leg cramped up. Stewart remembers falling to the ground and hoping the medics wouldn't have to come. He continued fighting through the excruciating pain with the help of a 59-year-old man who let Stewart hold on to his shoulders as they ran the last 400 meters toward the finish line together.

"It was the most humbling experience of my life," Stewart says.

He has run in three more marathons since: the Bellingham Bay Marathon, the San Juan Island Marathon and the Foot Traffic Flat Marathon just north of Portland, Ore. In the Foot Traffic Flat Marathon, Stewart ran his personal best of 26 miles in just 3 hours and 2 minutes.

The more Stewart lost weight, the more he wanted to keep losing. There were times when he struggled and surrendered to the darker side of dieting by starving himself.

When people don't eat, it slows their metabolism down, which is the opposite of what needs to happen when someone is trying to lose weight, Kelly says. "We need energy. Starving will promote the feeling of deprivation and could result in a rebound binge."

Stewart now maintains a healthy and active lifestyle. He works out at the gym three to four days a week and runs every day. He maintains a healthy diet, which includes eating six to eight small meals a day consisting of chicken, fish, pasta and vegetables. Most importantly, he doesn't drink soda or alcohol.

"It took me five years to get where I am now," he says.

He strips off his Seahawks jersey. After taking off this layer, it is clear that he isn't the obese person he once was, but a healthy athlete standing at 160 pounds, a San Juan Island Marathon T-shirt fitting his chest and arms just right. **K**





# Coating the surface

Story by Alissa Wolken  
Photo by Jordan Stead

It's a dark, cool night. The moon just barely lights their faces. Their hearts begin to race. The thunderous sound of cars zipping by drowns out their rustling. The thrill of getting caught overcomes them as they rush to finish. And then, in an instant, it's complete. A masterpiece. The renowned Interstate 5 rock has been painted once again.

For more than four decades, the rock on I-5 near the North Lake Samish exit has been tagged by thousands of people. The many layers of paint that consume the almost 10-foot-tall rock bring back endless memories for Bellingham residents.

Western alumna and athletic department employee Katie Rothenberg has painted the rock twice in the past year. In summer 2010, she passed on her experiences of painting the I-5 rock to Western's cheer squad, a team Rothenberg advises.

"The second time I did it, there were three of us girls and we called it 'The Day of Greatness,'" Rothenberg says, laughing. She says they painted the rock in broad daylight. "We painted the entire rock black and then wrote on a big pink lightning bolt, and it said 'Shazam.'"

Washington State Department of Transportation

spokesman Dave Chesson says the rock is on state-owned property. According to the Washington State Patrol, painting or defacing any state property is illegal.

While it is handled on a case-by-case basis, state trooper Keith Leary says the repercussions of painting the rock depend on what charges are made. "Since the rock is on state property, it would be illegal for someone to stop and get out of their vehicle on a limited-access highway unless it is an emergency," Leary says. "It could also be construed as malicious mischief."

Rothenberg doesn't think the rush of doing something illegal is what motivates the painters. "A lot of the messages I see on it are friendly and encouraging," she says.

Rothenberg says painting the rock was a great experience that, if done safely, others would enjoy as well. The rock, which has been painted by Western students numerous times over the past few decades, is covered in so many layers of paint, it no longer seems like a rock.

While Rothenberg's story is one of many, each layer of paint that envelops the rock tells its own tale. **K**



# Laying it down, mixing it up

## WESTERN MUSICIANS STACK TRACKS

Story by Gina Cole  
Photo by Jeremy Smith

**R**uss Fish pulls back a gray cover from a table in the control room, revealing hundreds of knobs, dials, sliders and cords.

"This," he says humbly, "is the mixing console."

Speakers about twice the size of Fish's head flank the console. A computer monitor is perched to the right. On the wall hangs a Telecaster guitar.

Fish is a Fairhaven College professor and the coordinator of Fairhaven's recording studio. He teaches four audio engineering classes each quarter, all of which bring his students here.

When a band records a song, each voice and instrument has its own microphone. Each microphone records what it picks up onto a "track." Students can then layer those recordings and manipulate each layer so it sounds better with the others.

The hit song "Such Great Heights" by The Postal Service uses some of these techniques. The song opens with distinct beeping noises that bounce frantically from one ear to the other. In reality, these are likely two separate recordings of different beeping noises, layered over each other. Audio engineers often focus sounds to certain sides to make the listener feel enveloped by the music. As the bass starts and the drum sounds fade in on "Such Great Heights," more layers are added.

Each individual track, or recording of an instrument, can be adjusted to affect the sound of the song. This can mean adding reverberation or echo, or changing the volume and the balance between the right and left speakers, as in The Postal Service's song.

"You can move, say, a guitar track from right to left," says Western sophomore Joe Davis, one of Fish's students. "[Listeners] don't know why it did that, but it makes [them] just trip out, you know?"

Davis is a music pre-major hoping to major in guitar performance. He is taking Fish's introductory class on Pro Tools, which is a type of computer software called a "digital audio workstation" — essentially a computer version of the giant mixing board in the studio's control room.

Davis says he plans to take the advanced class spring quarter and start mixing his own music.

"I heard [guitarist] John Frusciante [formerly] of the Red Hot Chili Peppers say he was using the studio as an instrument, and I was really curious about that because before him saying that, I had no curiosity about recording," Davis says. "I really like his music, so I wanted to figure out what he meant by that."

The Red Hot Chili Peppers song "Californication" is a good example of a lot of sounds being layered on top of each other at different volume levels to build intrigue and mood. The same techniques used on that song can be used in Fairhaven's studio to help students improve their own recordings.

The studio's live room is connected to the control room and is about twice as spacious. It looks like a converted garage and features an upright piano, amplifiers and microphones. Musicians play here or in a soundproof corner called the "iso-booth." Any noise that needs to be isolated — often vocals that are quite soft or quite loud — is recorded in here. A dead sound hangs in the booth as its walls steal any potential echoes before they can escape and bounce around.

Sound can be recorded in two main ways, Fish

### COMMON SOUND-MIXING TECHNIQUES

ACCORDING TO FAIRHAVEN AUDIO RECORDING STUDENT JENN GRUNIGEN

**DYNAMICS/LEVEL** = Some of the instruments in a song are not as important as others, so audio engineers make some louder and others quieter.

**EQ** = EQ lets you strip out particularly low or high sound frequencies or elaborate upon them. If, for example, a song has a lot of low bass sounds and the higher instruments need to become clearer, an engineer would remove some of the lower frequencies to make the higher frequencies pop.

**PANNING** = Directing the sound to the left or right speakers. This technique helps put the listener "in the song," Grunigen says. "Using Pro Tools (a computer program) or analog equipment (like a mixing board), the mixing engineer can, with the turn of a knob, make the sound go into the left or right speaker (or in-between)," she says.

**REVERB** = Short for "reverberation," this term refers to making sounds echo to varying degrees.



**Left:**

This microphone, called a "Mouse," is one of many used in the Fairhaven recording studio. It is designed to capture low sounds like bass or baritone vocals. It can be positioned into small spaces to pick up kick or snare drums easily.

**ONLINE  
EXCLUSIVE**

Check out the  
multimedia for this story  
at [klipsunmagazine.com](http://klipsunmagazine.com)

says: have every vocalist and instrument play at once and "mix down" the audio, or record each type of sound individually and then stack the tracks on top of each other.

In home recording setups, most people use the latter method because they don't have mixing boards or because they play all the instruments themselves.

Western senior Lisa Haagen records her music in her living room in Bellingham or her parents' home in Vancouver, Wash. She often layers her vocals, listening to the main vocals as she sings harmonies into a microphone to form another layer. Haagen plays multiple instruments, but never considered herself a singer until recently. "I was more of a to-the-radio singer," she says.

At her apartment, Haagen records each part of her songs separately, and then layers the tracks together with Pro Tools, which she is teaching herself how to use instead of taking classes from Fish. The setup has worked for her, though; she just finished an album.

Fish is currently working on an album with Brother Worm, a band from Eastern Washington. The band has only three members, but almost every song on the album will have at least 50 individual tracks, including recorded vocals, guitar, mandolin, accordion, drums and other percussion.

One of the more complex songs on the Brother Worm album, "Curses Upon Me," includes 20 drum tracks, two bass tracks, six accordion tracks, seemingly endless percussion, and various other layers including acoustic guitars, vocals, a dulcimer and a clavinet.

Recordings, unlike live performances, include no visual element, so musicians use layers to draw listeners into the music.

Choosing the right combination of instruments is just as important as the layering itself, Fish says. "[Mixing sound] is just like making cookies," he says. "You have to have the right amounts. If you have too much sugar, it's not going to be good."

Western senior Harrison Mills, aka Catacombkid, makes beat-centered music on his laptop, either making sounds on a MIDI piano or manipulating samples from old vinyl records. He uses a device called a Music Production Center 1000 (MPC) to record and loop the sounds. He then cuts up the sounds, layers them and tweaks each layer using Pro Tools, or another program called Reason, on his laptop.

As a new media design major, Mills says his musical skills factor into his career goals because they show he understands timing and knows the pacing of commercials. His songs have already been featured in a series of promotional videos for The North Face.

Mills says one of the most important things to think about when making music — whether it is his original work or a chopped-up set of old vinyl beats — is choosing the right sounds to go together and figuring out how to layer them in a way that immerses listeners.

"If you get lost in your own music, most likely other people will, too," he says. "So I try to do that."

It's easy to get lost in the endless sea of knobs, sliders and buttons used to mix sound. It's even easier to get lost in the layers of a well-mixed recording. **K**



# Beyond the high



## A FIGHT AGAINST DISEASE, STIGMA AND JAIL

Story and photo illustration  
by Benjamin Woodard  
Photos By Jordan Stead

**A** year before her 18th birthday, Rachel Cox was bedridden for three days in the worst pain she has ever experienced. Cox had snorted heroin daily for more than a year by then, and her parents had intervened to stop her addiction. The symptoms of withdrawals were unbearable. Her joints ached. She was tired but couldn't sleep. Cox says it was like the worst flu she has ever had, coupled with the worst case of food poisoning.

The demons inside wanted more opiates.

"I started smoking marijuana and drinking when I was about 13," Cox says. "I come from an alcoholic home. And everything that comes with being in an alcoholic home — fights, that kind of thing. My mother drank until I was 15." Cox grew up in an upper-middle-class family, and her story is the same as that of any addict: The more you use, the more you're

hooked, and the harder it becomes to kick it. The term "kick" comes from detoxing opiate addicts kicking their legs to relieve the pain built up in their joints, Cox says. And for those 72 hours, she kicked a lot.

For her, the total detox lasted more than a week. "The only thing I was able to keep down and eat was cantaloupe and watermelon," she says.

Addiction is more than a superficial problem. Its source may lie deep in the recesses of the mind, in the memories of the abusive mother, the neglectful father, and in the synapses, hormones and complex connections that make up the brain. The result is a layered and contested explanation of addiction's roots. Be it the opiates targeting dopamine receptors in the brain, a traumatic event or a genetic predisposition, the results of an addiction are universal: dependency, pain and shame.



## Layer 1: The rewired brain

Western neuroscience professor Jeff Grimm, who researches addiction in rats, says the brain is rewired as a person abuses drugs.

On the fifth floor of the Academic Instructional Center, Grimm and his colleagues get rats hooked on sugar. When a rat pushes a lever, a drop of sugar water rewards it. After a while, when the reward system solidifies the behavior, Grimm takes away the reward. The rats push but nothing comes out. The rats push the lever like an addict pushes heroin into her veins day after day. The dependency is created through a dopamine reward system in the brain.

"Sexual reinforcement also goes through that system," he says. "Here's a mate, an opportunity. It can also be related to a particular context, environment, odors — all these things can play onto this system that apparently evolved just for basic survival, like remembering where important things are."

Cocaine, heroin, food, video games or pornography, for example, can hijack that system of reward. To complicate the addict's struggle, the chronic use of drugs can damage the frontal cortex, which is the part of the brain important for judgment, planning and controlling impulsive behavior, Grimm says.

"You become like a kid, because kids don't have very well-developed frontal cortexes. They're very impulsive," he says. "They run out in the street when you tell them 400 times not to do that."

# 75%

of alcohol and other drug addicts in Whatcom County completed their stays in detox in 2009

# 20%

of other alcohol and drug addicts left detox against program advice

*Statistics courtesy of TARGET,  
Treatment Analyzer  
and Whatcom County  
Needle Exchange Survey*

Whether these systems can be repaired is contested. It's like dropping a china plate, shattering it in a million pieces on the floor and then trying to glue it all back together. In the brain, he says, are trillions of synapses. Over the course of an addict's life, those tiny connections are manipulated, rewired and destroyed. It may be their brain, but the brain is what makes them who they are, and the cravings come from the "rewired part of the brain," Grimm says. "The little demon."



**LEFT:** Those arrested on drug-related offences don't always have to end up in jail; they have alternative options. The men pictured are waiting to be heard in Drug Court, a minimum one-year program for drug offenders.



## Layer 2: Incarceration

Wendy Jones, chief of corrections at Whatcom County Jail, watched an inmate, recovering from alcohol addiction, bleed out in his cell from esophageal varices, a condition caused by a slow-working, damaged liver that can't clean as much blood as the heart pumps to it. The blood builds up pressure and can cause vessels to burst.

The 40-year-old inmate, whom Jones knew well, coughed in his jail cell. A vessel the size of a middle finger burst in his throat. In four and a half minutes, he was dead.

Jones was a sergeant then, about 20 years ago, but she vividly remembers what happened. After the vessel burst, she says he banged on the door for help. She went to his cell and called paramedics. His stomach filled with blood. He vomited much of it out into the cell, painting the cinderblock walls and concrete floor bright red.

"I stayed with him while he died. He started drinking when he was in middle school," she remembers.

At least two-thirds of the inmates in the jail are there for drug-related offences, Jones says, and it's not just because of possession. Fueling a drug addiction is expensive, so someone arrested for shoplifting may have been stealing in the first place to buy more drugs.

It costs about \$25,000 a year to house an inmate in the jail, and many return on related charges, Jones says. Drug addiction may be a public safety problem, but when offenders are thrust into the courts and jails, the addiction spreads into taxpayers' pockets.



**ABOVE:** Drug Court Coordinator Leigh Wirth says she'll need to reduce the number of participants, at any given time, from 80 to 50 because of the state's strapped budget.

Some alternatives to jail time exist for addicts, such as drug court, a minimum one-year program where addicts in trouble with the law commit to abstinence in exchange for freedom. Coordinator Leigh Wirth, a recovering alcoholic and former marijuana user, says the option is intensive and not fit for everyone. The addict must commit to random and frequent urinalyses, group meetings and other long-term commitments. Slip-ups could lead to punitive time in jail.

Wirth says bravado hinders many addicts from seeking help. "It's really hard to go to a group of 20 young men between the ages of 18 and 27 and say fear is running your life," she says. "Because they would say, You talking to me? You're not talking to me!"

Addiction is in every family, she says, rejecting the common myth that addiction only affects people living on the streets or, as Wirth puts it, "the people without a dentist." The misconceptions about class and drug use are widespread, but the statistics are the same across them all — about one in 10 people suffer from addiction. But in our society, she says, people are afraid of addicts or people with other mental diseases. The stigma is just as far-reaching.

"[People with money] don't need drug court; they need a good attorney to get it reduced to something they can live with, like a misdemeanor. We have a broken system," she says, quoting a private defense lawyer. "We are criminalizing addiction; we always have. We've been sucking on coca leaves since we climbed out of the cave."

Budgets are strapped statewide, and Drug Court is no exception. A proposed upcoming cut could force Wirth to reduce the number of participants, at any given time, from 80 to 50.



**ABOVE:** About 20 years ago, Chief of Corrections Wendy Jones witnessed a man bleed out in a cell, like the one seen above on the first floor of Whatcom County Jail, due to complications with an alcohol-damaged liver.



Cox relapsed with heroin every two weeks or so after she detoxed at home. Before, she would cross the border daily into Abbotsford, British Columbia, to buy narcotics. She spent about \$50 a day, using her tips and paychecks from her job as a barista. If she needed a little extra cash, she would make an excuse to her parents to get more.

On homecoming day of her senior year at Blaine High School, her outpatient counselor said she needed to get into an inpatient clinic because of her level of addiction. A week later she went into Sundown M Ranch treatment center in Yakima for 28 days. She was sober for a week after she got out before using again.

After the relapse, she went back for an additional 56 days. "I spent my birthday, Christmas and New Year's in treatment," she says. "And I've, thankfully, been sober ever since." She celebrated nine years of sobriety on Nov. 30, 2010.

Cox, now 27, believes treatment can help addicts who want to kick their drug use. She runs Advanced Choices, an outpatient clinic near Cornwall Park in Bellingham. Shortly after leaving treatment, she worked at another outpatient clinic, and the owner wanted to retire. Cox got the licenses she needed through the State and took on the previous owner's 80 clients — a big jumpstart beyond the usual 10 or so clients most people start with in the field.

Advanced Choices began contracting with the county in 2008, accepting patients on Department of Social and Health Services coverage. Cox says she has seen an increase in heroin use within the past few years in Whatcom County, mainly among high school students. The claim jibes with comments from the Whatcom County Health Department. According to its data, 61 percent of opiate addicts — which includes some prescription drugs, such as Oxycontin — are under the age of 30.

Kathleen Peterson, one of three prevention specialists working for Bellingham Public Schools, meets directly with students who have been referred to her by parents or teachers for substance abuse. She has also seen the increase in heroin use within public schools.

"Kids use [drugs] as a way to cope — to numb themselves," she says, remembering a student who said in a group meeting, "I don't think I'm addicted to the drugs; I'm addicted to wanting to feel different."

Peterson is also concerned that the poor economy will beget more addicts. She says the financial stress exuded on parents who have lost a job or who are

struggling to pay the bills, trickles down to the kids — they feel it. Some of these kids use drugs to feel less of their emotional burden.

"One girl didn't know from one day to another if she would be homeless," she recalls about a student. The girl used marijuana to feel better, but now mom and dad live in a car, and she moved in with her friend's family, Peterson says. She's clean now.

The 72 hours of immeasurable pain and misery an addict feels while detoxing may be nothing compared to the relational, societal and physical ramifications of addiction. What's seen upfront is a superficial glance at the disease of addiction. What lies layered below that surface illustrates the complexity of the human condition. Treatment may be the last place for addicts to turn.

“I don't think  
I'm addicted to the drugs;  
I'm addicted to  
wanting to feel different.”

BELLINGHAM  
PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT

Derek "DJ" Welch has been booked into the Whatcom County Jail six times. His first was in August 2007 for possession of marijuana, according to jail bookings. In the summers of 2008 and 2010, Bellingham Police arrested him for alleged heroin possessions. He's now a part of drug court and has violated its terms twice because of his heroin use.

Welch is hours late for his morning urinalysis. Wirth asks him whether his sister's place in Ferndale is a safe place to stay for the night.

"Yeah," he responds.

"Did you use [heroin] yesterday?"

"Yeah," he says faintly.

"Did you use this morning?"

He nods.

"What are you willing to do differently?"

"I'm willing to do anything."

And so goes the life of an addict. **K**





# The **big** cover-up

WHAT IS THE PRICE OF BEAUTY?

Story by Nicole Strep  
Photo illustration by Jaynie Hancock



A woman stares into a mirror, ready to apply her “second face.” She starts with her eyes, layering a blend of Chai Latte and Beach Plum eye shadow, then traces her lids with a jet-black eyeliner. The final step to making her eyes pop is a coat of propylparaben on her lashes before brushing a layer of titanium dioxide on her entire face. Her look is completed with some concealer.

Propylparaben, an ingredient in mascara, has been linked to developmental and reproductive toxicity, endocrine disruption and allergies. Titanium dioxide, an ingredient in an organic foundation powder, has been linked to cancer, according to the Environmental Working Group’s cosmetic safety database, Skin Deep. The Environmental Working Group is a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C. The database compiles information from more than 50 other established databases.

Western freshman Kellie Zulauf describes the routine she goes through almost every morning with the products mentioned above. After a while, the chemicals in those products add up. What starts as one chemical in one product becomes a variety of chemicals in numerous products being used every day.

But what is Zulauf — or any person — putting on her skin when she uses makeup, hair or hygiene products? The problem is, no one knows.

Stacy Malkan, author of “Not Just a Pretty Face: The Ugly Side of the Beauty Industry” and co-founder of the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics, says in an e-mail that chemicals enter the body in three ways: They can be absorbed through the skin, inhaled or ingested.

Although Zulauf says she is aware the products she uses may contain unknown chemicals, she doesn’t want to know the details.

In 2002, Malkan started looking into what chemicals were in makeup. She describes her findings as “not too pretty.” Some of the chemicals she found were phthalates, which have been linked to birth defects. Looking at labels of various products, she did not find phthalates listed. However, when tests came back, 72 percent of the tested products contained them.

One of the biggest misconceptions among consumers is thinking cosmetics companies are testing the chemicals in their products, Malkan says. “What woman wants to put carcinogens on our faces or on our babies in the bathtub?” she says. “Nobody that I know of, but that’s what millions of women are doing every day.”

Malkan says cosmetic companies need to be held accountable for what is in their products. The Campaign for Safe Cosmetics aims to ensure that toxic chemicals are removed in favor of safer alternatives.

More than 1,500 companies have signed the campaign’s Compact for Safe Cosmetics. By signing, companies pledge to not use chemicals banned in Europe, to be transparent about product ingredients and to use safe alternatives for the chemicals in question. Malkan says the campaign will be checking which companies are fully complying and updating the compact. No major conventional companies have signed the compact.

Zulauf says companies should not put chemicals in makeup or other products that may harm consumers. “Instead of looking toward making a profit, they should focus on our best interest, which is health,” she says.

Skin Deep, found at [costmeticsdatabase.com](http://costmeticsdatabase.com), ranks products from zero to 10, with 10 being the most potentially hazardous.

“What woman wants to put carcinogens on our faces or on our babies in the bathtub? Nobody that I know of, but that’s what millions of women are doing every day.”

STACY MALKAN



Though this website is helpful, it has no definite answers about what products to use or avoid. The campaign introduced a bill in Congress in 2010, but the session ended before it could be voted on. The bill will be reintroduced in 2011, and if it passes, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will be able to ensure products do not contain harmful ingredients and require full disclosure of all ingredients.

Dangerous things can be found in unlikely places. A tiger is dangerous, yet people flock to the zoo to see it. Makeup could be harmful to a person’s health, but long-term effects are unknown. These underlying effects are hidden, just as the danger of a tiger is shadowed by a steel cage. The tiger is still dangerous, but it does not appear to be. Makeup could be dangerous, but nothing has been done to affirm or disprove this idea.

Until tests are conducted and results are produced, Zulauf will continue her morning routine. She will do this knowing she does not know everything about her makeup. She will wait for someone to tell her whether these chemicals will harm her. She will wait to learn more about something that is a part of her daily routine.

For now, we wait for answers. **K**





# Forgotten foundation

BENEATH BELLINGHAM LIES A NETWORK OF COAL-MINING TUNNELS

Story by Sakeus Bankson  
Photos courtesy of Whatcom Museum



**O**n the surface, Bellingham is many things: a bayside city, a port and a center for timber and agriculture. But 80 feet below Railroad Avenue, somewhere between Pepper Sisters and Starbucks, lie miles of silent and forgotten tunnels, stretching for unknown distances at unknown depths. These ashy, black warrens reach as deep as 1,200 feet and riddle the bowels of the city. They are the remains of what was once Bellingham's primary resource — coal.

Although few physical signs of the mines still exist, no layer is more basic than the ground we walk on, and the history of Bellingham is inseparable from the history of its coal mines. For more than 100 years, Bellingham was a coal-mining city, bustling both above and below ground with the activity of the sooty industry.

It was coal before timber or fishing that drew the first white settlers to the shores of Bellingham Bay. Lured by Native American stories of flammable material in the ground, William Pattle started work on Whatcom's first coal mine in 1852, sinking a shaft near what is now The Chrysalis Inn & Spa in Fairhaven. The Sehome Mine — and the town of Sehome with it — sprang up a year later and was one of the biggest initiators in bringing ships and settlers to the Bay.

"Out in the county there were people on logging crews and things like that," says George Mustoe, a paleontology professor at Western. "But in Bellingham, compared to the other jobs like lumberyards and shipyards, the coal mine was the big industry."

Mustoe has made the mines a hobby since 1993, when an old miner visited his office. Since then, he has collected and recorded more than a dozen interviews with miners and gathered more than 100 photographs as well as numerous maps and geological surveys.

The Sehome Mine, lying beneath Railroad Avenue and State Street, is one of the earliest and the most mysterious of the Bellingham mines, Mustoe says. Because it was owned by a company out of San Francisco, all records of the mine and its exact location were destroyed in the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906.

"We know where the entrances to the mine were and we know the general directions the tunnels run, but in coal mines, the workings spread out," Mustoe says. "There's a honeycomb underneath this part of downtown Bellingham, but we don't really know how deep it is to the tunnels, and we don't know just where they run."

## BELLINGHAM COAL-MINING TIMELINE

- 1852** William Pattle starts work on the first coal mine in Whatcom Country at Pattle's Point near Fairhaven at the site of what is currently the Chrysalis Inn & Spa and the beginning of Taylor Dock. Pattle abandons the mine a few years later, when it proves commercially unsuccessful.
- 1853** Work begins on the Sehome Mine. The town of Sehome quickly grows around the mine, which becomes the major contributor to the economy on the bay and draws people from around the country to work in the mine.
- 1861** Charles Richards starts work on the Union Mine near Pattle's abandoned claim. The town of Unionville quickly springs up around the mine.
- 1868** Unionville burns down.
- 1877** The Sehome Mine closes due to fires, cave-ins, high costs and a volatile coal market.
- 1890** Work begins on the Blue Canyon Mine at the upper end of Lake Whatcom.
- 1895** Methane explosion kills 23 workers in the Blue Canyon Mine.
- 1918** Work begins on the Bellingham Coal Mine. In the next four decades, the tunnels will extend 1,100 feet below sea level and underlay huge areas of modern-day Bellingham.
- 1920** The Blue Canyon Mine closes due to numerous accidents, dwindling coal outputs and competition with the newly formed Bellingham Coal Mine.

According to the only existing map of the mine, the tunnels under the alley behind Pepper Sisters should be 200 feet deep. In the 1930s, however, a car had to be towed out of a sinkhole that developed on the lot — proving the tunnels to be only 10 feet deep.

A similar surprise occurred in the early 1990s, when the City of Bellingham was looking into building a parking garage where the downtown Starbucks is currently located. The mine should have been 300 feet below street level and caved in, but two boreholes





“There’s a honeycomb underneath this part of downtown Bellingham, but we don’t really know how deep it is to the tunnels, and we don’t know just where they run.”

GEORGE MUSTOE

drilled at the construction site found the workings a mere 80 feet deep, open and filled with water.

Jack Francis worked in the Bellingham Coal Mine from 1939 until 1940. His father was a coal miner, and after his father was injured in a mine near Mount Rainier, the family moved to Bellingham. Now 90, Francis started work in the mine at 18; he says that by the end of the year, he and his father were pulling out more coal than anyone, moving 5 or 6 feet further down their 20-foot-wide tunnel each day.

“Dad did all the technical work. He was in charge,” Francis says. “I got really, really good at shoveling.”

The Bellingham Coal Mine, also known as the Birchwood Mine, was the largest and most successful in the city’s history. From around 1918 until late 1954, workers burrowed to depths of about 1,100 feet below sea level, working in a honeycomb of rooms along its 11 levels. At its peak, the mine employed approximately 200 workers, and by the time it closed, stretched under much of Bellingham’s Birchwood and Columbia neighborhoods.

While the work was dirty and difficult, Francis says it was considered one of the better jobs in Bellingham. It was always dry, the temperature stayed the same, and the pay was impressive as well, Francis says.

“We made about \$10 a day, and it wasn’t uncommon to make \$300 in a month,” he says. “It was a good-paying job. That was a lot of money in those days.”

Francis remembers waking up at 4:30 a.m. and walking from his home in the Maplewood neighborhood to be at the mine by 5:30 a.m. During the shorter winter days, he says, the miners wouldn’t see the sun for as many days as they were working. Each pair of miners was responsible for filling eight carts of coal each day, loading as much as 20 tons between them.

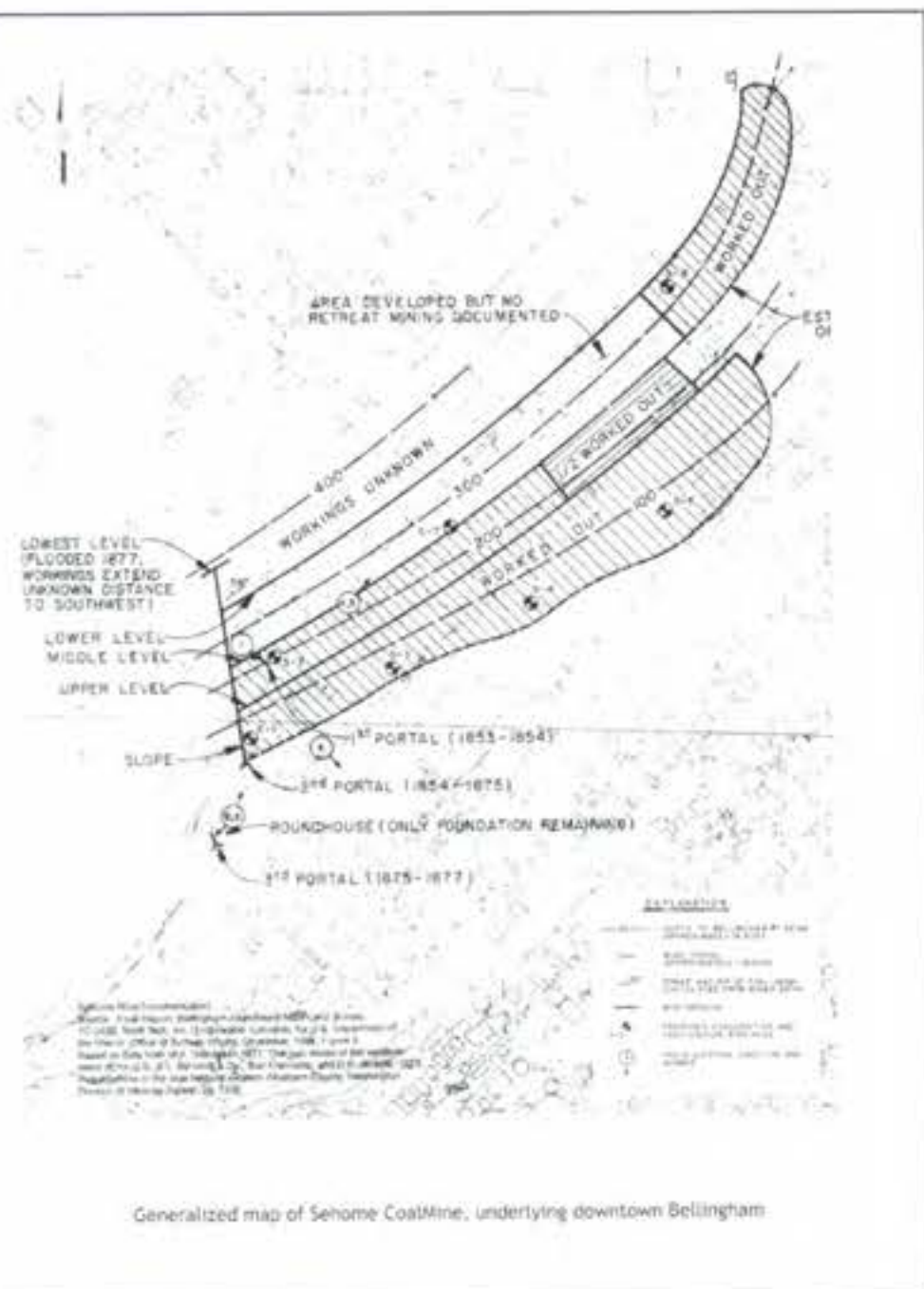
Laverne Geleynse worked in the Bellingham Coal Mine from 1947 until 1949. His father-in-law was a coal miner and got him a job at the mine, where they worked together on the 10th level for his first few months. Geleynse’s brother was hired on soon after, and they worked together until Geleynse left the mine. Geleynse, now 84, says that while the work was difficult, it was in no way mindless.

**PREVIOUS PAGE:** Coal miners in the interior of the Bellingham Coal Mines, 1920s. Photo by J. W. Sandison.

**ABOVE TOP:** Miners heading into the Bellingham Coal Mines, 1937. Photo by Ben Sefrit

**ABOVE:** Henry Flockenhagin watches as a Dodge sedan is lifted from a hole over the old Sehome coal mine shaft behind Sanitary Meat Co, 1017 N. State St., Dec. 6, 1954. Photo by Jack Carver





**ABOVE:** The only existing map of the Sehome Mine, which underlies downtown Bellingham.

"It was an intellectual challenge," Geleynse says. "You had to work all these things in your head at the same time — drilling, moving coal, putting up timbers. In your head, they were all working; physically, you couldn't work them all at the same time. The challenge was laying it out so you could step from one to the other and not lose time or work harder, all while staying safe. I just loved the challenge of the job. I really did."

Mustoe, Francis and Geleynse all agree that, as coal mines go, the Bellingham mine was an impressively safe operation, but Geleynse adds that there was still an inherent danger — he was almost killed when the roof at the front of the room he was working in collapsed. He says he coughed up coal for years after leaving the mine, but serious injuries or deaths were a rare occurrence. Even so, the risk and the strangeness of working underground was something you either got over quickly or you quit, Geleynse says.

"People always heard how deep we were and could not believe it. 'That's so far down! That's terrifying,'" he says. "The thing is, what difference does it make if the ton of rock fell 10 feet or 1,000 feet? You're still dead."

Despite the danger and the immensity of the operations, Geleynse thinks few Bellingham residents knew the mine existed when it was operating, much less now, and with the low quality of the mine's coal, there's

**BELOW:** Bellingham coal mines. Pictures courtesy of the City of Bellingham.



no chance of it opening again.

Francis says, "I talk to people about the mine, and they say, 'What mine is that?' People know nothing about the mines now. Nothing."

Forgotten by the current populace or not, the mine is alive in both Francis and Geleynse's memories. Francis still wishes he could have worked another year or two in the mine and even after a long, celebrated career as a police officer, Geleynse says mining was one of the more mentally demanding things he has done.

"I enjoyed mining because of the challenge," Geleynse says. "It was a high point, but then I've had a lot of high points. I still value the experience. As you can tell, I'm still enthusiastic about it."

Almost no visible signs of the mines remain today. All the portals are closed, most with buildings or parking lots on top of them. The opening of the Pattle Mine now has a bench directly on top of it, and what was the mouth of the Birchwood Mine is now an Albertsons grocery store. No trace of the Sehome Mine exists except in rumors, legends and surprises for people digging under the city. But however absent the mines may be, the layers of black soot and tunnels sitting silently beneath Bellingham make up more of its foundation than the layers of sawdust, fish scales or concrete that came afterward. **K**



# Dressing through the decades

FASHION THROUGH THE AGES

Story by Shawna Leader  
Photos by Jaynie Hancock

A garage isn't an unusual place to uncover relics from the past, but it's rare that anyone finds treasures. Not that it's impossible: Rummaging through her parents' garage one summer, Jessica Lynch, president of Western's DIY Ethics and Arts Alliance, found a new wardrobe. In a box labeled "High school clothes," Lynch discovered a fashion identity she'd never lived but now could wear. She layered her mother's '80s styles with contemporary clothing, giving the vintage clothes a second life.

Lynch had no trouble incorporating items such as an orange and pink reversible belt into her current style. "I loved the colors and wore it as an accessory over skirts and pants mostly," Lynch says. "It added a pop of color to my modern clothes."

Layering generations of styles to create a contemporary look lets people add some of the past to their personal style.

"Layering goes with not just mixing patterns and styles, but eras and decades," says Danielle Starr, owner of 4 Starrs Boutique in Fairhaven.

The boutique exudes a modern vibe, but the past has never been more present. A tunic dress in a black and gray floral pattern recalls the '70s, but is displayed under a gray peacoat reminiscent of '60s glam.

A trend that is regaining popularity is the '70s bohemian style, inspired by musician Janis Joplin, Starr says. The look involves layered patterns, knitted clothes, ponchos and lots of accessories. "It's lifestyle clothing, it's comfortable, it has a bit of hippie flair," she says.

Clothes from — and not just inspired by — the '70s are abundant at Nostalgia Vintage Wear in



**ABOVE:** Lian Snowden cuts and sews, repurposing a dress she bought from Goodwill. Snowden is a senior at Western and is a member of Western's DIY Ethics and Arts Alliance.

Fairhaven. A crocheted brown, white and orange vest over a light brown button-up, topped off with a brown velveteen coat, is just one of the layering options owner and manager Lynn Loewen displays in her store.

In '70s fashion, bright or earthy colors belonged at the top of the outfit, while rich-colored clothing was worn on the bottom. "We think this whole layering thing is so new," Loewen says. "But I remember layering everything in the '70s."

Shopping at Nostalgia is like raiding the ultimate vintage closet; the store specializes in clothes from the '30s to the '80s. Loewen's rule for wearing vintage is that at least two pieces of the outfit must be from the same decade.

Following her own rule, she wears a purple '40s knit dress, '80s ankle boots, pearls and a "Marilyn Monroe beaded bombshell sweater." Floral-print tights and stacked bracelets complete the layered look.

Styles inspired by the past contribute to the colorful mix of clothes at Buffalo Exchange in downtown Bellingham. In the store, a sunshine-yellow



beaded cardigan hangs near soft flannel button-up shirts recalling grunge chic. Cardigans, especially longer styles, are popular items, says store manager Bridget Herbers. The flannel shirts don't linger on the racks, either. "They come in a lot, and they sell pretty well," she says. The shirts, typically in plaid, are often worn over T-shirts and under hoodies and jackets.

Layering adds warmth as well as texture to outfits, says Kellie Sammon, manager of Lulu in downtown Bellingham. "To build an outfit, to make something interesting, with our climate, is seeing different layers, different lengths, seeing different patterns," she says.

If you aren't as lucky as Lynch, and your family members' old clothing met the Goodwill bin a long time ago, layering vintage styles can become a do-it-yourself (DIY) project.

One of Lynch's favorite '80s styles is leg warmers. She makes them from the sleeves of old knit sweaters or pajama bottoms and ribbon. To create a layered skirt, she sews the bottom of one skirt to another.

"It's seeing the potential in a piece of clothing to create different clothing, or more clothing," Lynch says.

The alliance hosts quarterly clothing swaps, has arts and crafts projects at its weekly meetings and hopes to hold large DIY events in the future.

Punk fashion is a DIY movement that originated in the '70s and layers boots, leather jackets, buttons and chains, Lynch explains. Emulating the punk style, Western graduate Sam Johnson used a leather piercing needle to put approximately 2,000 metal studs on a leather jacket he found at Goodwill. The final product weighs about 12 pounds and demonstrates the occasional burden layering can be — but it's all in good fashion.

"Wearing studs, belts and boots, I could add 25 pounds to my weight," Johnson says.

While Johnson says he'll never give up his jacket, some fashion is meant to be passed on. Lynch's belt ended up with her sister, but it wasn't the only piece of vintage clothing she inherited from her parents. A Rolling Stones concert T-shirt her dad acquired in the '70s is one of Lynch's favorite tees. She wears it under a zip-up hoodie, proving that layering decades of fashion can be casual, contemporary and cool. **K**



**ABOVE CLOCKWISE:** Manager Bridget Herbers holds up a striped, mid-sleeve shirt in the consignment clothing store Buffalo Exchange. // Men's plaid shirts hang in Buffalo Exchange on a full rack in an array of colors. // Western senior Jessica Lynch, president of DIY Ethics and Arts Alliance, knits a scarf for her sister, Joslyn Lynch, at the DIY Ethics and Arts Alliance meeting. The club meets at 6 p.m. every Wednesday.



# A cake for every occasion

WASHINGTON CAKE  
ARTISTS ARE ADVENTUROUS  
IN THEIR BAKING  
ENDEAVORS

Story and photo by  
Michelle Naranjo

A Disney Princess cake for a daughter turning 5 years old, a four-tier wedding cake with floral piping embellished with butter cream frosting, a "Congratulations!" sheet cake for a high school graduation party. Cake culture is overtaking the world, one layer of fondant at a time. Here in the Pacific Northwest, cake makers are not afraid to break the norm and strive to defy gravity with every colossal cake they create.

Washington is home to some talented self-taught cake creators who have no formal training. This gift for their craft, combined with years of experience, places them on the same level as any Cake Boss out there.

Andra Millage, owner of Let Them Eat Cake in Bellingham, has been in the cake business for 28 years. Specializing in 3-D sculptured cakes and wedding cakes, Millage's cake creations have appeared in such publications as Seattle Bride and Seattle Metropolitan Bride and Groom.

Millage said she was doing 3-D cakes way before anyone started seeing it on television. She has made sculptures in the shape of turkeys, golf bags, running shoes, champagne bottles, boats and cars.

The most requested flavor in Millage's shop is chocolate. Lemon comes in as a close second.

"You'll get waves of certain flavors that people will want because they've seen them in magazines or on TV," Millage says. "Red velvet has had resurgence in the last three years; nobody had asked for a decade. Carrot cake also comes in and out of favor. It's all a matter of what people see."

When a cake calls for an unusual ingredient, Millage knows exactly how to get the right taste without putting the rest of the cake at risk for disaster.

"One thing you want to make sure is that you don't compromise the integrity of the cake. Every ingredient in a cake has a purpose," Millage says. "For example, if you have a piña colada cake, you could include pineapple curd. You might not want to put pineapple itself in the cake batter, because it could mess with the consistency of the cake."

Self-taught and the sole owner of her business, Millage works at a fast pace, moving from client to client. Summer is her busiest season, because Bellingham people tend to get married during that time of year. During these months, Millage says she will work 100 to 120 hours each week constructing cakes for Bellingham's brides- and grooms-to-be.

When making colossal cake creations, fondant can be a necessity. Fondant is a gelatin-like frosting that a lot of bakers will use when sculpting because it gives cakes a smooth appearance. Fondant is hard to master, especially because it can easily tear if one is not careful.



# Cake-savvy terms

## ■ **Curd:**

a substance formed from the coagulation of milk by acid or rennet, used in making cheese or eaten as a food

## ■ **Fondant:**

a frosting similar to gel, used when sculpting to give a cake a smooth appearance

## ■ **Marzipan:**

a molding dough consisting of almonds, powdered sugar and corn syrup

Although fondant may seem like the most popular choice among bakers, it certainly is not the only option.

Rob Clough, a self-taught cake decorator at The Erotic Bakery in Seattle, says he uses marzipan, made from scratch, instead of fondant.

"Marzipan is the grown-up version of Play-Doh," Clough says. "It is more confusing to make a box of mac 'n' cheese than it is to make marzipan."

Marzipan contains only three main ingredients: almonds, powdered sugar and corn syrup.

The Erotic Bakery has been around for 26 years, and its number-one customers are bachelorettes.



**ABOVE:** This carefully carved creation is just one of the cake designs that Millage has entered into a recent bridal show.

Clough says people come from all over the Pacific Northwest because it is one of the few bakeries that specializes in erotic baked goods.

They don't have a set menu per se, but they do have what they call a family photo album. This album contains a collection of photos taken of customers' cakes previously ordered from the bakery. These customers came in with specific cake ideas in mind for Clough and his team. Clough says these photos help spark the imagination of new customers who come into the shop without knowing exactly what they want.

Sometimes people come into the bakery and get a little timid talking about what they want their cake to look like. It takes so much to draw information out of people sometimes, Clough says.

"We're going to ask you, so just tell us the truth," Clough says. "The more information you give us for the cake, the more precise and tailored we can make it."

The Erotic Bakery has also been known to repair some broken hearts. One of Clough's most memorable cake requests came from a woman who had just gotten a divorce. She and her entourage of friends came rolling up to the shop in a limo. They ended up ordering a cake with an erect penis on it that read, "He was just a big dick anyway!" Clough says that, to this day, he does not know if they kept the cake for a divorce party or if it was delivered as a revenge cake to the ex-husband. He simply sighs and says that once the cakes leave the shop, a baker doesn't always know what happens with them.

Whether you want a cake that is forest-themed or phallic-shaped, Washington bakers will take any idea thrown at them to the next level, without question. No problem. For them, it's a piece of cake. **K**



# Making the call

## TO GO OR NOT TO GO: THE DANGERS OF AVALANCHES IN THE BACKCOUNTRY

Story and photo  
by Kaylin Bettinger

**W**estern student Sam Giffin, 26, didn't see the wall of snow coming or feel it move under his feet. But suddenly, a jolt, and he was tumbling. He thought the snow moved slowly, bouncing him gently off trees and rocks. In reality, the small bumps were violent as the snow slid quickly down the steep terrain. But he didn't struggle; he just waited it out.

Something in him told him he had been there before — a sort of accident *déjà vu* — the same way some people feel when they hit their head, Giffin says.

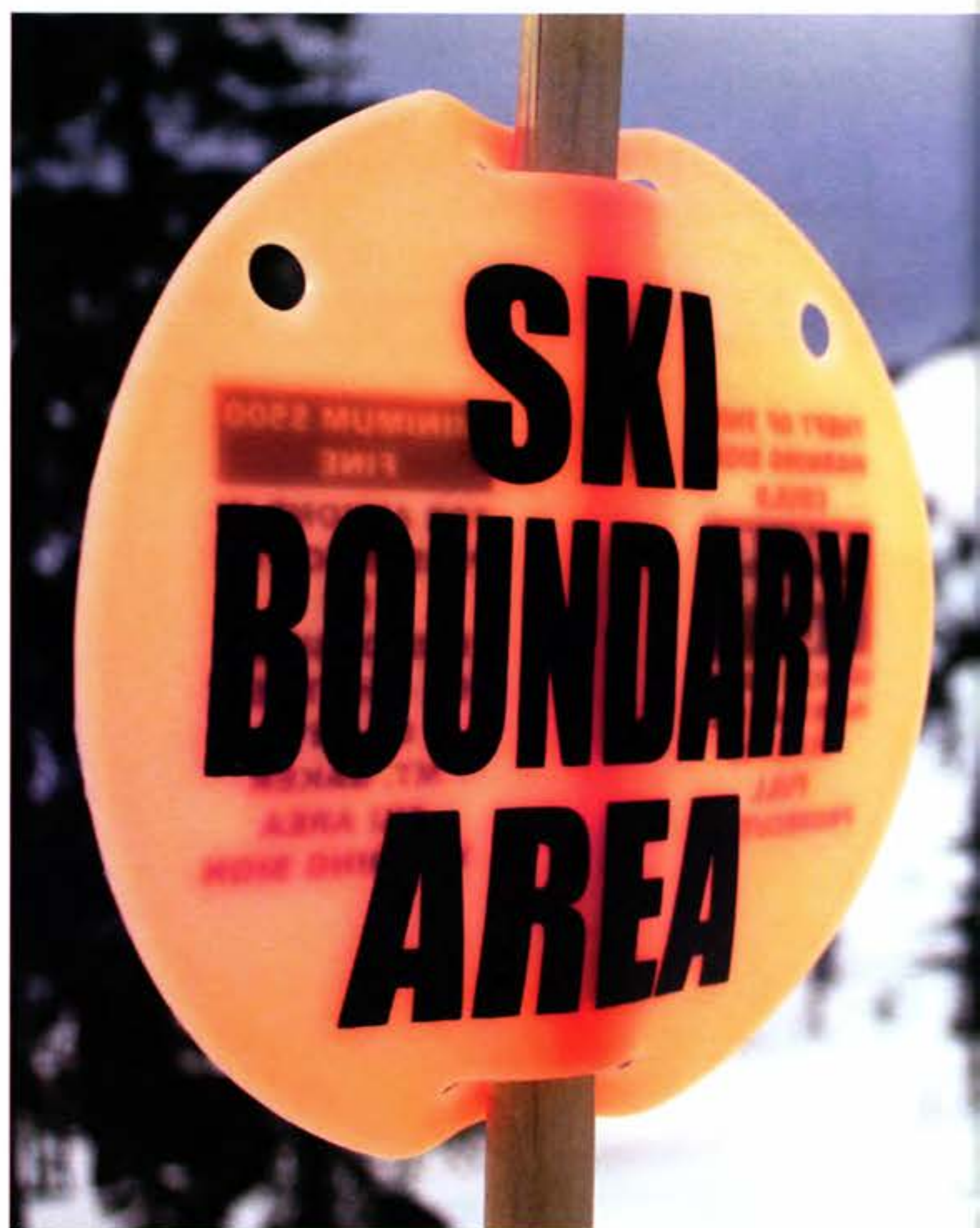
"The weird thing it made me do was relax," he says. "Like, 'Oh it's fine, I've been here before.'"

But he hadn't been in an avalanche before. It carried Giffin hundreds of yards down "Elf Chutes" — a steep series of chutes, trees and cliff bands in the backcountry near Mt. Baker Ski Area. He came to rest upside down, with his snowboard barely sticking out of the avalanche debris above him. That's when panic set in.

"All of a sudden it kind of stopped. I felt snow on top of me, and it was dark, and it was solid, and I thought, 'No, I haven't been here before,'" he says. "That's when it really changed. That's when the *déjà vu* feeling stopped and I thought, 'OK, not cool. At all.'"

It took only a few minutes for Giffin's friends and brother to dig him out of the debris, but on top of blowing out the ACL and PCL in his knee during the avalanche, the experience changed Giffin's perspective forever.

"I definitely cried when I came out," he says. "I looked at my brother and hugged him. I don't know if other people kind of felt what I felt because it happened so quick, and then I was OK. But to me, I really got the flash of like, 'Whoa, that could have ended all future possibilities of whatever I want to do with life. Why is that worth it?'"



Slab avalanches, like the one Giffin was buried in, occur because snow falls in layers, and each layer is draped over the terrain and subject to the effects of gravity, says Mark Moore, avalanche forecaster for the Northwest Avalanche Center (NWAC). Each storm, each day or each hour can produce different types of snow crystals because of different temperatures, winds, sun radiation and weather patterns. The snow falling from one storm can bond with the snow from another storm in any number of different ways, causing the bonds between the layers to be weak, strong or anywhere in-between. When the force of gravity or the force from a skier, rider or climber exceeds the strength of the bonds, those bonds break, the snow releases, and avalanches occur.

Giffin's experience isn't common, but he is not alone. In 2007, the year Giffin was buried, one person was killed by an avalanche in Washington. The year after, nine people died. Already during the 2010 – 2011 winter, a climber was killed in December in the Cascades.



**BELOW:** A backcountry access sign marks the ski area boundary between Mt. Baker Ski Area and nearby Mount Herman, a popular backcountry destination for skiers and snowboarders.



In recent years, the number of people accessing snow-covered backcountry terrain around the Northwest has skyrocketed. Moore has seen a steady upward trend of avalanche deaths in the United States since he started with NWAC more than 30 years ago. Washington has the fifth-highest number of avalanche deaths of all the states, according to data from NWAC. Following Colorado, Alaska, Utah and Montana, 48 people have been killed in Washington in the past 25 years.

Moore attributes that trend to the learning curve of each of the different types of sports that enter the backcountry. In the '70s and early '80s, it was cross-country skiers and telemark skiers who were using the backcountry and setting off slides, Moore says. In the mid- to late-'80s and '90s, it was snowboarders and then backcountry skiers. Then there were snowmobilers. And now, an unlikely demographic: snowshoers.

"Each new user group that comes out has this learning curve, and it's relatively steep. Now we've got

snowshoers, and they're thinking they're just going on a hike in the mountains. But it's really different when you're in snow-covered steep slopes rather than just steep slopes," Moore says.

More than 30 years ago, Moore, now 63, was working as a ski patrol at Mammoth Mountain in California when he realized he didn't understand snow very well.

"I thought I was making some mistakes that were potentially deadly," Moore says. "I didn't understand all the stuff I was seeing happen in the snowpack, and I certainly didn't understand the weather that was making those changes."

He went back to school at the University of Washington to study meteorology. When he graduated, he and Rich Marriott, current King 5 meteorologist, received a grant to start the Northwest's first avalanche center.

Moore has continued working as director, mountain meteorologist and avalanche forecaster of the center. His and his team's predictions about the weather and snowpack are consulted by everyone from Northwest skiers and snowboarders to the Department of Transportation, which controls avalanches near highways.

Northwest Avalanche Center and many Northwest mountains work together to collect data from the ski areas themselves. Mount Baker Ski Area collects snow and weather data from the base at the Heather Meadows Lodge and at the top of Pan Dome. Moore uses this information to make predictions about Mount Baker's backcountry, which is accessed consistently by skiers and snowboarders leaving the ski area to access nearby terrain.

Almost four years after the avalanche, Giffin still rides in the backcountry near Mount Baker. Most of Giffin's decisions about snowpack come from his own observations and tests and safe backcountry travel practices.

He says there is old etiquette for safe travel, such as skiing one-at-a-time and stopping in safe zones. Though he knows different styles of riding are making their way into the backcountry, he believes rules set by generations of skiers before him should be followed.

"As dorky as the old ways are, they should be respected," he says. "Staying alive is not dorky."

And out of anyone, he would know. **K**





# Not taking any chances

HOW LOCAL RESIDENTS PLACE  
SECURITY IN THEIR OWN HANDS

Story by Evan Marczynski  
Photos by Jaynie Hancock

**K**arl Rollin carries his Smith & Wesson M&P40 semi-automatic pistol with him everywhere he can. When he's in a place where his concealed carry permit won't allow him to keep his gun, the 21-year-old Western senior sometimes packs a pair of knives instead.

At home he keeps a Winchester 1200 12-gauge shotgun, a Henry .22-caliber rifle, an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle and a Ruger Redhawk revolver that shoots .41 Magnum rounds. But if you ask him if he's building an arsenal, he'll smile and shrug.

"Some people would say that. I don't. It's a very modest collection."

These weapons provide him with peace of mind, and firearms are just one security layer local residents use to keep safe. By adding additional layers of

neighborhood watch programs, community activism and home security systems, an enveloping array of personal security emerges aimed at keeping control over the risks of everyday life.

Rollin became a gun owner when he was 18, after trading a motorcycle on Craigslist for a pair of guns. Since he started college in fall 2007, he's been involved with an advocacy group called Students for Concealed Carry on Campus. The organization's two-fold mission is to dispel what they say are common myths about guns and to push state lawmakers to drop concealed carry restrictions. Current Washington state law forbids firearms on school grounds.

Whether people should carry concealed weapons is a hotly debated issue. A 2006 study by the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that 58 percent



# Personal security at home

## How to stay safe in your residential area

*Information from U.S. State Department on maintaining personal security*

- 1 Get to know your neighbors so you can keep an eye out for each other.
- 2 Install sound locks on all home entrances, preferably deadbolt locks.
- 3 Don't leave an extra key hidden outside your home.
- 4 Keep your doors locked, even when you're home.
- 5 Keep flashlights in several areas of your home and check the batteries often.
- 6 If you use an alarm system, keep it in functioning order.
- 7 Use smoke detectors and check batteries often.
- 8 A dog can be an effective deterrent to criminals, but even the best guard dog can be subdued with food or poison.
- 9 Watch out for suspicious people and activity. Report anything unusual to police.
- 10 Know where family members are throughout the day.

of police chiefs nationwide support prohibiting people from carrying guns in public. Rollin insists concealed carriers are just taking a proactive approach to security.

"Every person who's even remotely concerned about their own personal safety should take measures to protect themselves. Police can't be everywhere," he says. "I think that it's reasonable to be concerned about safety, but I feel that safety comes down to individuals more than anything else."

All creatures have an instinct to stay safe, says Nancy Corbin, director of Western's Counseling Center and licensed psychologist. With a high level of cognitive ability, humans are acutely aware of potential threats and have developed an extraordinary amount of security layers. Since there is no authority on the appropriate level of security, the layers one surrounds oneself with depend on personal preference.

Corbin says security layers grant people denial over potential danger, such as violent crime. This denial can help them comfortably function. On a deeper level, a major fuel for extra concern over security is the human impulse to survive.

"I think it all boils down to the fact that ultimately, we're mortal," Corbin says. "We know on some level that we cannot survive forever."

As a crime prevention officer with the Bellingham Police Department, Officer Katrin Dearborn spends most of her time giving residents safety information so they can improve the security in their neighborhoods. She says the most common crime in town is property crime. The best defense is simple and less controversial than carrying a gun: locking up your things.

"It sounds so simple, but people don't do it," Dearborn says. "What we mainly see in Bellingham is property crime, and the crimes that we have are crimes

of opportunity."

Dearborn also coordinates Blockwatch, Bellingham's neighborhood watch program. Blockwatch helps people increase the sense of security in their neighborhoods. When people begin to see neighbors as friends instead of strangers, they look out for each other and provide an extra layer of security for themselves, Dearborn says. This cohesion is the main philosophy behind Blockwatch.

“Every person who’s even remotely concerned about their own personal safety should take measures to protect themselves. Police can’t be everywhere.”

KARL ROLLIN

Nelson's Market, on the corner of Humboldt and Potter streets, is a hub of the York neighborhood. Local residents come into the small grocery store to buy items such as ice cream, breakfast burritos and beer. Some have a seat in one of the tall wooden booths of the attached café. They have breakfast, drink coffee and chat with each other. In a front window facing the street is a large handwritten sign that reads, "Turn on your porch lights." It's advice that Anne Mackie, who owns the market with her husband, gives to all her neighbors.

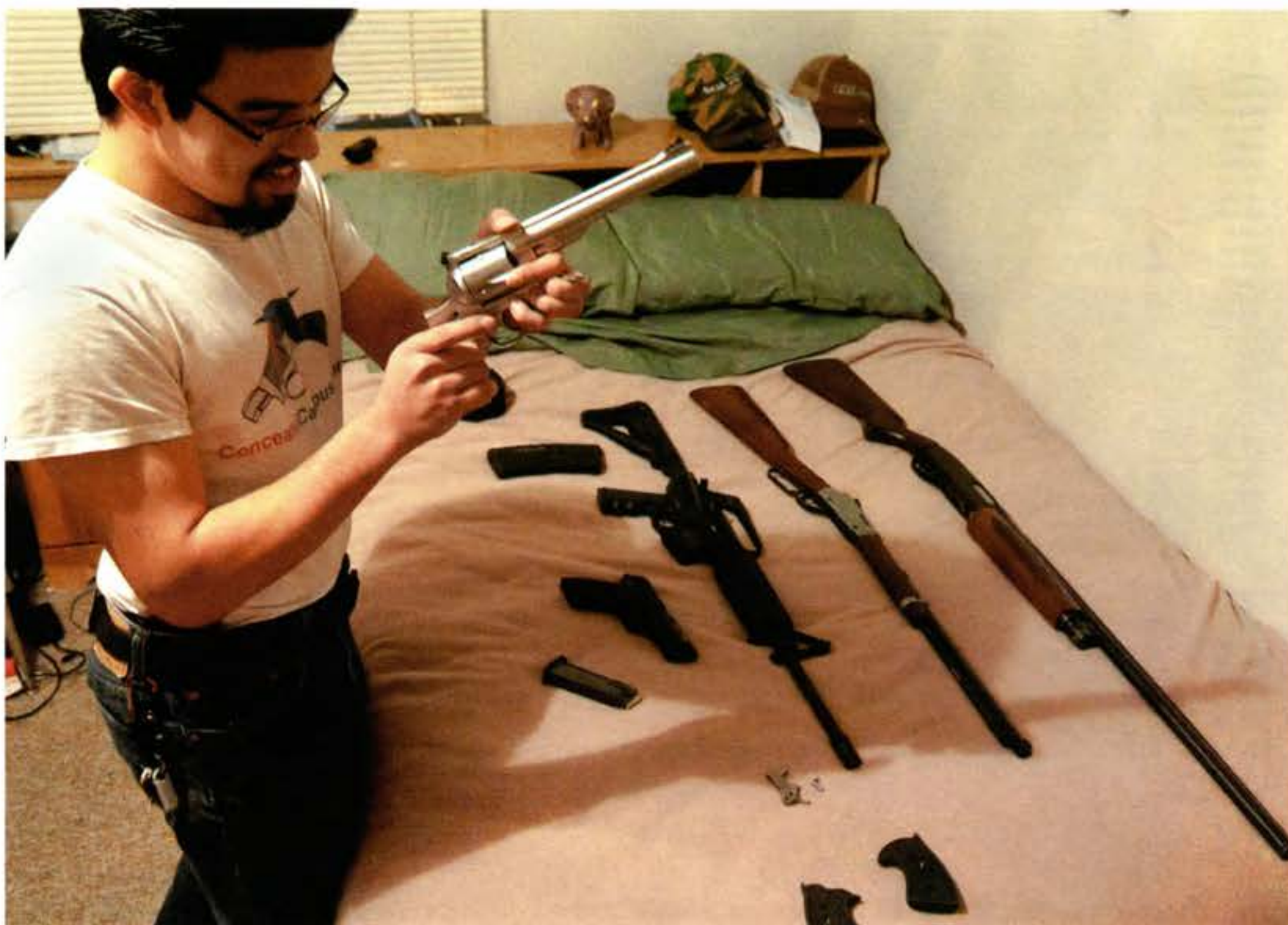
"We say — and this is what the police have taught us — light up your house like it's Halloween night and you're expecting trick-or-treaters," Mackie



**PREVIOUS PAGE:**

Western senior Karl Rollin is part of an advocacy group called Students for Concealed Carry on Campus, and he regularly carries a concealed Smith & Wesson M&P40 semi-automatic pistol.

**RIGHT:** Rollin grasps onto his Ruger Redhawk revolver as he puts the pieces of the gun back together. On his bed, from left to right, lies his Smith & Wesson M&P40 semi-automatic pistol, AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, Henry .22-caliber rifle and Winchester 1200 12-gauge shotgun.



says. "Keep the front porch lights on and leave them on all night; criminals like to skulk around in the dark."

As a complement to Blockwatch, York residents have put an emphasis on neighborhood involvement, which has developed their own unique layer of security. They make extra efforts to get to know each other. They tell each other when they will be heading out of town and if long-term guests will be visiting. The neighborhood association holds open meetings every other month and has its own newsletter, *The Yorker*. Mackie says these aspects have given neighbors a sense that their neighborhood truly belongs to them, which has helped everyone feel more secure.

Lifelong Bellingham resident Jamie Vos has always worked in the security industry. As the general manager of Security Solutions Northwest, a life safety and security company located on North State Street, Vos says security all boils down to one being aware of the threats that one may face. His store sells a range of products that provide high-tech layers of home security. The most popular one is the monitored intrusion alarm, which can detect entry into a home through a door or window.

He says burglars not only take people's property,

but they also leave people feeling violated. When people walk into his store after experiencing a break-in, Vos can tell something about their personalities has changed even if he's never met them before.

"I see too many people come in having lost memories and having lost their sense of their home being their castle," he says. "Their home is no longer this safe place that it always was."

Property crime and personal threats are major concerns of his customers. Apart from that, Vos says a lot of people looking to buy extra layers of security simply want peace of mind.

When renowned psychologist Abraham Maslow placed security along his scale of basic human needs, he was saying that everyone must feel safe in order to reach the height of life. To achieve this, some people use many security layers while others use none.

Karl Rollin brings along a gun when he's out in public and believes his security is an individual responsibility. Anne Mackie keeps her neighbors connected, and that sense of community helps her feel safe. These methods differ from each other, but the final aim for anyone who uses some layer of security is likely the same: finding peace of mind. **K**



# Peeling it back

EVERYTHING YOU'VE ALWAYS WONDERED ABOUT ONIONS

Story and photo  
by Kaylin Bettinger

**T**en years have passed since the popular kids' movie "Shrek" reminded us that onions have layers. But inside that white, yellow or red onion is much more than layers. The mysterious veggie you never wanted to eat as a kid and still makes you cry when you cut it leads us to ask, "What's up with onions?"

## HEALTH BENEFITS OF ONIONS

Onions are chock-full of nutrients and have 45 calories per bulb, according to the National Onion Association. They contain high amounts of chromium and vitamin C and are a good source of fiber. Beyond supplying these vital nutrients, onions may also:

- + Increase good cholesterol and decrease overall cholesterol
- + Regulate blood sugar levels, helping to manage diabetes
- + Improve digestive health and reduce the risk of many gastrointestinal disorders
- + Prevent bone loss associated with osteoporosis

(All statistics are from the National Onion Association and are verified by Brenda Brenden, nutrition assistant at the King County Health Department).

## HOW TO GET RID OF ONION BREATH

Chew parsley. It is considered a natural palate cleanser, says Kimberly Reddin, spokesperson for the National Onion Association. "It used to be that when you went to a restaurant, it was uncommon to not have a piece of parsley on your plate," Reddin says.

## WHY DOES AN ONION MAKE YOU CRY?

1

When the onion is whole, two parts of the onion cell — amino acid sulfoxides and sulfenic acids — are kept separate.

2

When you cut up an onion, the knife breaks apart the cells. They mix and produce propanethiol S-oxide, a sulfur compound that wafts upward toward your eyes.

3

This gas reacts with the water in your eyes to form sulfuric acid — the same stuff you used in high school chemistry experiments. The sulfuric acid burns, stimulating your eyes to release more tears to wash the irritant away.



## HOW TO STOP ONIONS FROM MAKING YOU CRY

"The bottom line is that nothing is going to stop you from crying," Reddin says. But, there are some things you can do to slow down the tears.

- + Chill the onion before you slice it. The cells of the onion are more rigid when they are cold, so the knife won't damage the cells as much as it would with a warm onion, Reddin says.
- + Josh Quesada, cook at Boundary Bay Brewery and Bistro, says once you slice the onion, the juices turn to vapor and there's not much you can do.
- + "The only things I know for sure — I've been doing this for 15 years now — are contact lenses and goggles, like swimming goggles," Quesada says.





# KLIPSUN

is a Chinuk Wawa word meaning sunset.

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